



Skills Funding
Agency

Community Learning 2013/14

Information for Community Learning Providers

Skills Funding Agency

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Changes from Version 1:

- Slide 13: new third bullet
- Slide 14: fourth bullet expanded
- Slide 17: fourth bullet amended
- Slides 19-24: new section added
- Slide 30: second bullet is new.

Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to:

- set out the context for Community Learning policy in 2013/14
- explain what is **required** of Community Learning providers and what this means in practice
- give an overview of the work of the 15 Community Learning Trust Pilots operating in 2012/13
- provide details on Pound Plus
- set out where more information can be found including a Question and Answer document that will be updated regularly
- set out the objectives within *New Challenges, New Chances* (Annex A).

Policy Context and Background

What is Community Learning? (1)

- ...a broad range of learning that brings together adults, often of different ages and backgrounds, to pursue an interest, address a need, acquire a new skill, become healthier or learn how to support their children.
- A key part of the learning continuum – it is **non-formal** (and at times informal) as distinct from formal (Adult Skills Budget).
- Undertaken for its own sake – may or may not lead to a qualification or result in direct progression to other learning / training but will usually have wider progression outcomes.

What is Community Learning? (2)

- Community Learning can be delivered in many ways, for example:
 - structured courses taught by professionally qualified teachers
 - independent study online
 - self-organised groups
 - short chunks of learning or a course of a year.
- Agency currently funds 320 providers (direct contractors) to deliver Community Learning. Provider base is a mix of Local Authorities, FE colleges, Specialist Designated Institutions and some large voluntary organisations.
- Budget has remained at £210 million each year for a number of years.
- Learner numbers in 2011/12 - about 681,400.

Community Learning Policy 2013/14

Context

- Community Learning policy for 2013/14 builds on developments that have occurred over several years .
- Supports wider Government policy on:
 - freedoms and flexibilities
 - decentralisation and localism
 - accountability and community empowerment
 - public service reform.

Skills Funding Statement (1)

- **Skills Funding Statement** (published December 2012) confirmed:
 - continuation of the £210m budget in 2013/14
 - policy direction on community learning.
- In 2013/14, all providers directly funded by the Agency for community learning will be required to:
 - ‘deliver a truly locally-determined learning offer that conforms to the objectives set out in *New Challenges, New Chances*’
 - ‘operate in strong local partnerships to ensure their plans and strategies are underpinned by engagement with communities, Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and other key local stakeholders’.

Skills Funding Statement (2)

- ‘Allocations will remain the same as in previous years but will now be regarded as a contribution to locally owned community networks with clear strategic plans, priorities, delivery objectives and measurable learner outcomes – the ambitions of which will only be achieved by securing additional revenue over and above the public subsidy available’.
- In essence, this means that the *strategic approach and ways of working* of Community Learning Trusts are being rolled out more widely.
- The Agency is **not** rolling out a single ‘Trust model’ as providers will need to determine their own appropriate partnership model and delivery strategy.

Requirements for Providers

What are Providers Required to do? (1)

As a minimum - all providers must:

Funding Rules

1. Have in place a strategy that sets out how they have identified and will deliver a relevant balance of the objectives set out in *New Challenges, New Chances*.
2. Evidence how they will operate in strong local partnerships to ensure their objectives are underpinned by engagement and consultation with communities, Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and other key local stakeholders.
3. Have clear outcomes and appropriate measures capable of evaluation by their community and local stakeholders.
4. Develop and implement a robust financial strategy that adds to their Community Learning allocation.
5. Abide by funding eligibility and criteria set out in the Agency's Funding Rules.

Funding and allocations

- Funding Rules 2013/14 set out how Community Learning funds are to be utilised.
- Note that the Funding Rules no longer make separate reference to the four programme elements within the Community Learning budget (Personal and Community Development Learning, Wider Family Learning, Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities and Family English, Maths and Language).
- The aims of these four elements are still important – separate funding rules removed to give providers maximum flexibility and because they are encompassed within *New Challenges, New Chances* objectives – Individualised Learner Record reporting remains against the four elements in 2013/14 (see next slide).
- Allocations for 2013/14 remain at least the same value as in 2012/13.
- Allocation and payment processes remain unchanged.
- Agency will confirm process for Funding Claims and reconciliation as soon as it can.

Data and audit

- Critical that providers return timely and accurate Individualised Learner Records (ILRs).
- ILR reporting requirements for 2013/14 published on the [Information Authority website](#)
- Some changes to Community Learning fields including the removal of several fields that were previously 'optional'.
- In 2013/14, ILR returns still need to be made against the four programme elements (Personal and Community Development Learning, Wider Family Learning, Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities and Family English, Maths and Language) so the Agency can monitor and report on up-take and delivery.
- The Agency's audit regime for Community Learning remains the same in 2013/14.

What Does This Mean in Practice?

What does this mean in practice? (1)

- It is the **strategic approach and ways of working** of Community Learning Trust Pilots that are being rolled out – not a fixed ‘model’.
- Many providers will already be working towards and operating within these policy objectives.
- Providers will be required to utilise 100 per cent of their Community Learning allocation to achieve a relevant balance of the objectives.
- Allocations now seen as a contribution (see later slides on Pound Plus).

What does this mean in practice? (2)

- The Agency is seeking to minimise bureaucracy and set requirements that are proportionate to the size of the budget.
- The Agency will not be signing off 'plans' produced by providers – but will be looking for evidence that the requirements set out in the Funding Rules and policy objectives for 2013/14 (slide 11) have been met.
- It is for providers to determine how they will evidence that requirements are being met (over and above mandatory returns such as ILR data and Funding Claims) – no national prescription – the Agency will work with the sector on this.
- Existing review processes between the Agency and providers will be used to discuss progress and address issues.

What Does this Mean if the Provider is Currently a Community Learning Trust Pilot?

- The policy direction for 2013/14 is an endorsement of what the 15 Pilots have achieved so far.
- In 2013/14, these pilots will:
 - not be considered 'Pilot Trusts' but more mature and experienced delivery agents of the mainstream approach
 - no longer be subject to any additional evaluation or data gathering
 - need to route 100 per cent of their allocation through this approach
 - have a key role in sharing lessons learned, warts and all, to inform the rest of the sector.
- All arrangements for the remainder of 2012/13 remain unchanged.

Preparing for 2013/14

Preparing for 2013/14

- Providers need to begin planning the approach they wish to take from August 2013/14:
 - Review current Community Learning offer in the context of policy objectives for 2013/14 and the wider adult offer – see *New Challenges, New Chances* slides at the end of this slide pack.
 - Become familiar with the work of the Community Learning Trust Pilots in 2012/13 including Pound Plus.
 - Look at the requirements set out in the Funding Rules.
 - Consider and agree an appropriate balance of objectives.
 - Use national and local support provided to help shape future strategy.

Things to Consider (1)

Strategy and ambition

- Identify community priorities.
- Involve local communities in developing the offer.
- Agree appropriate mix and balance of objectives.
- Draw on past experience.
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- Use intelligence from Community Learning Trust Pilots.
- Provider(s) may wish to publish a plan (their agreed strategy) for their community / learners – no requirement.

Things to Consider (2)

Partnerships

- Agree which other providers, partners, networks to work with.
- Agree priorities and ambition.
- Agree management / operating arrangements.
- Ensure coherence of offers locally – avoiding gaps / duplication.
- Engage and consult with relevant local stakeholders.

Things to Consider (3)

Financial strategy

- Treat public investment as a contribution – starting point.
- Identify other resources including human resource (volunteers).
- Develop and ensure Pound Plus strategy in place – making public investment go further by generating additional income and through savings / efficiencies (see slides on Pound Plus).
- Consider and promote value for money within the strategy.
- To note: in 2012/13, Community Learning Trust Pilots have been subject to detailed reporting requirements on Pound Plus. This will not be the case for any Community Learning provider in 2013/14 (there is no requirement to submit information to the Agency on Pound Plus), but Pound Plus will feature in discussions with the Agency's Relationship Teams.

Things to Consider (4)

Evidence

- Ensure ILR data is accurate and timely.
- Agree what outcomes will be measured - these should be meaningful for local communities and stakeholders.
- Ensure effective evaluation measures are in place.
- Agree whether to publish progress against outcomes.
- Agency Relationship Managers will not be scrutinising or ‘signing-off’ plans or strategies but will be assuring themselves that the spirit of the policy and Funding Rule requirements are being met – a role best described as ‘support and challenge’.
- Monitoring will take place through normal Agency Relationship Management processes.

Community Learning Trust Pilot Information

Community Learning Trust Pilots (1)

- Key document is the [Community Learning Trust Pilot Prospectus](#) published in April 2012.
- In 2012/13
 - 15 Community Learning Trust Pilots (comprising some 40+ providers) have been testing new ways of planning and delivering community learning
 - 78 applications to set up Community Learning Trust Pilots were received embracing nearly half of current Community Learning providers
 - Many of the providers that were unsuccessful have been working in the spirit of the Pilots
 - All areas have at least one Pilot operating except London and the Thames Valley

Community Learning Trust Pilots (2)

- Pilots are operating from August 2012 until August 2013.
- Pilots did not have to be / do not have to be legal entities.
- No additional funding for being a Pilot – each Pilot is using its existing Community Learning funding allocation.
- Pilots are led by Agency-funded Community Learning providers but the networks and partnerships underpinning and contributing to them are far wider.

Objectives

Four key areas of focus:

- Identifying and targeting disadvantaged groups and/or individuals.
- Transforming people's lives by engaging them in learning and enabling them to progress (in the widest sense).
- Generating fee income, through the universal offer, from those who can afford to pay.
- Using fees and other sources of income and resources to widen subsidised access to Community Learning for people who are disadvantaged and can't afford to pay, as defined locally.

Where / Who are the 15 Pilots?

1. West Sussex County Council
2. Kent County Council
3. Friends Centre (Brighton and Hove)
4. Exeter College
5. Bristol City Council
6. The Learning Partnership Bedfordshire and Luton Ltd
7. Luton Borough Council
8. Solihull College
9. Birmingham City Council
10. Derby City Council
11. Sheffield City Council
12. Cheshire West and Cheshire Council
13. Cumbria County Council
14. Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
15. Sunderland City Metropolitan Borough Council

What Lessons are Emerging from the Pilots in 2012/13? (1)

- A formal evaluation of the Community Learning Trust Pilots is underway and findings from that evaluation will be shared to help all Community Learning providers prepare for 2013/14.
- Interim evaluation report available [here](#).
- NIACE (through their support programme for the Pilots) has identified the following four emerging themes:
 1. collaborative planning and partnerships
 2. community engagement and consultation
 3. generating additional resources
 4. widening provider networks.

What Lessons are Emerging from the Pilots in 2012/13? (1)

- Ahead of the formal evaluation of the pilots, BIS, the Agency and NIACE have identified the following early emerging themes and activities:
 - The concept of a ‘Trust’ was refreshing old partnerships and stimulating new ones.
 - Small amounts of money (and invested time) have a big impact – small grants used to tackle local / specific issues effectively.
 - Providers working together for the first time to create a single offer for a local area.
 - Effective use of shared premises (small providers able to use college facilities and in doing so attracting new learners).

What Lessons are Emerging from the Pilots in 2012/13? (2)

- ‘Something for something’ - one pilot has asked for a £5 contribution from all learners which has had a positive impact on retention – others have asked learners to put something back into the community by volunteering as mentors, supporters and enablers.
- Investing time and development in the workforce (tutors *and* volunteers) is really important and a critical success factor.
- A ‘brand’ for the Delivery Partnership (the Pilot) has been seen to reap benefits when applying for other funding / grants.
- Some Pilots are planning at ward level, using thematic groups, involving learners in local decision making, adopting a ‘community of enquiry’ approach.

Pound Plus

What is Pound Plus?

- The 'Pound' represents the *public pound*.
- The 'Plus' is everything else that providers can generate in addition to their funding allocation:
 - fee income
 - funding from other sources
 - resources in kind
 - other sources of revenue/sponsorship/volunteering.
- As such, Pound Plus is not just a strategy to increase resources, income and learner numbers - it's about how that growth will be used wisely with full attention given to value for money and quality.

Robust Financial Strategies

- Pound Plus strategies are designed to generate additional resources and learners over and above what was available and achieved last year.
- As part of developing robust financial strategies, providers will need to consider:
 - What was our allocation last year?
 - How many learners did we have?
 - What fee income did we generate?
 - What other funding did we lever in?
 - What resources in kind did we have?
 - And what about our funded partners?
- Based on this, what is the *ambition* for growth next year?
- Skills Funding Agency will ask Community Learning providers how they are 'adding' to their allocation in order to achieve the objectives.

Pound Plus Indicators

- Increased fee income.
- Increased commercial sponsorship and support via contributions in kind.
- Increased use of volunteers.
- Increased income from external bids.
- Rationalisation, enhancing and re-focusing of the curriculum offer.
- Improved efficiency through the use of shared back-office services or sharing premises.
- Greater social impact of learning on the wider community, such as health, wellbeing, crime.
- Other measurable indicators developed by the provider.

Support

What Support can Providers Access?

- Skills Funding Agency Area Relationship Teams issued a letter to all Community Learning providers in early February 2013 - this set out the support available nationally and that which will be provided by Area Relationship Teams.
- Every provider has a named contact in their Area Relationship Team.
- A Community Learning page on Agency website will contain supporting information such as this standard presentation, a Question and Answer document and information on Community Learning Trust Pilots – this will be updated regularly.
- Stakeholder organisations are engaged nationally (such as Association of Colleges, HOLEX, LEA FEA and Third Sector National Learning Alliance).
- Existing provider networks and groups will be key.

Annex A

New Challenges, New Chances

Objectives

Published December 2011

New Challenges, New Chances – Objectives (1)

- Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills.
- Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot.
- Widen participation and transform people's destinies by supporting progression relevant to personal circumstances, for example:
 - improved confidence and willingness to engage in learning
 - acquisition of skills preparing people for training, employment or self-employment
 - improved digital, financial literacy and/or communication skills
 - parents/carers better equipped to support and encourage their children's learning
 - improved/maintained health and/or social well-being.

New Challenges, New Chances – Objectives (2)

- Develop stronger communities, with more self-sufficient, connected and pro-active citizens, leading to:
 - increased volunteering, civic engagement and social integration
 - reduced costs on welfare, health and anti-social behaviour
 - increased online learning and self-organised learning
 - the lives of our most troubled families being turned around.

New Challenges, New Chances – objectives (3)

- Commission, deliver and support learning in ways that contribute directly to these objectives, including:
 - bringing together people from all backgrounds, cultures and income groups, including people who can/cannot afford to pay
 - using effective local partnerships to bring together key providers and relevant local agencies and services
 - devolving planning and accountability to neighbourhood/parish level, with local people involved in decisions about the learning offer
 - involving volunteers and Voluntary and Community Sector groups, shifting long term, 'blocked' classes into learning clubs, growing self-organised learning groups, and encouraging employers to support informal learning in the workplace
 - supporting the wide use of online information and learning resources
 - minimising overheads, bureaucracy and administration.

